

Can We Please Put Prayer Back in Schools Now?

Even people who don't typically pray are **praying** in the wake of what has now officially become the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history. That's the right response to the senseless killing of 20 children and eight adults, but it's time to take this issue of prayer a step further.

Rather than waiting until the aftermath of a Columbine, Virginia Tech or Newtown school shooting to pray, can we please put prayer back into schools on Monday morning? I know it's not as simple as that, but I ask you: If Columbine wasn't enough, if Virginia Tech was not enough, can the Newtown school shooting finally be enough? If not, when is enough enough?

In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court examined a 22-word prayer children used to acknowledge God. That prayer went like this: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country."

It's a simple, but powerful prayer that I believe invoked God's protection over schools and inspired morality in the hearts of a generations. Removing **prayer** from schools has spawned a well-documented impact on our educational system and on the broader society.

Indeed, David Barton's *America: To Pray or Not to Pray* offers statistics on the impact of **removing prayer from schools**. I won't recount all the numbers here. Suffice it to say that there has been a dramatic rise in teenage pregnancy, unmarried mothers, the divorce rate, violent crimes, illegal drugs, abortions, single parent homes ... Across the board the nation has witnessed a dramatic rise in immorality and it began at a

precipitous pace when prayer was removed from schools.

Skeptics will deny any correlation between prayer in schools and morality in our nation, but I beg to differ. By giving children the opportunity to participate in a prayer every morning from the time they are old enough to attend school, they were exposed to the person and power of God. By shutting God out of the school system, many children lost the chance to invite Him into their families and into their hearts.

Clearly, our nation needs God now more than ever. Allowing students to participate in a moment of prayer every morning is not a panacea for our nation's problems, but it's one step in the right direction. It's righting an old wrong. It's showing God a measure of repentance. It's opening the door for Him to move in our families, our schools, and our country at a greater level.

The decision to remove prayer from public schools in 1962 was unpopular then and it's unpopular now—yet it remains in effect. It's time to get down on our knees and pray for the right for a moment of prayer in public schools again. It's probable that many students would tune out during the daily prayer. It's likely that there would be debates over whether it should be a Hindu, Muslim or Christian prayer. It's almost certain that the ACLU and atheist activists would put up a fight.

But if God is for us, who can be against us? I believe God has been waiting for His people to rise up with a unified voice of righteousness against the immorality in this nation. I believe God has been patient through our prayerlessness. And I believe if we set our hearts toward reinstituting Christian prayer in schools it could help fuel the prophesied Great Awakening in this generation.

Some experts are reporting that nothing could have prevented the Newtown school shooting. Again, I beg to differ. I think

prayer could have prevented it. And I think reinstating prayer in public schools can prevent the next mass murderer from stepping foot on campus and prematurely ending more innocent lives.

So, in the wake of yet another tragedy, can we please put prayer back in schools now?

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